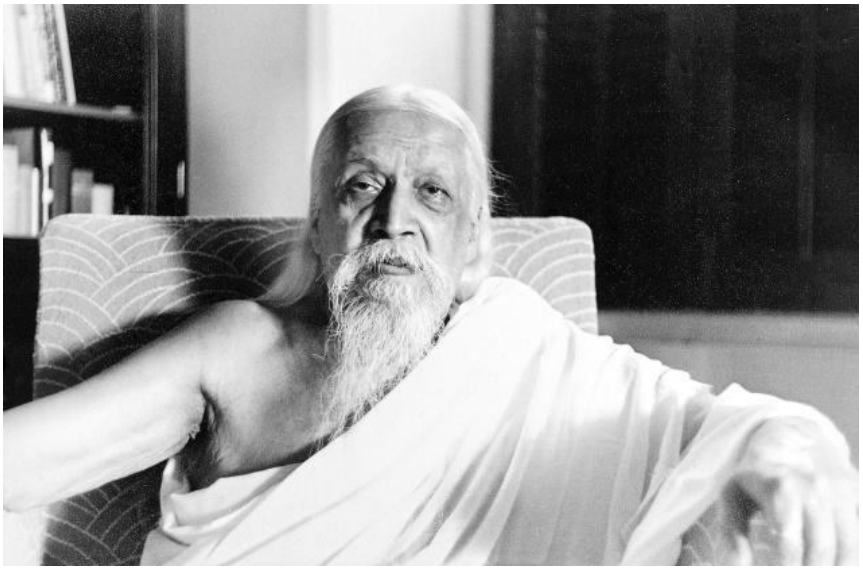
Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar



Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

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Dedication

This work is lovingly dedicated at the lotus feet of:

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

There is only ONE caste -The Caste of Humanity

There is only ONE religion –The Religion of Love

There is only ONE language –The Language of the Heart

There is only ONE God –He is Omnipresent

.....Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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PREFACE

This free ebook is a compilation of information on the famous **Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.**
For this Ashram (temple), information in respect of its history, architecture, spiritual importance, various departments, life stories of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, how to reach there, nearby places to see etc are given (See pages 6 to 29).
From page 30 to 79, very good photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, temple, activities connected with temple etc. are shown.
Links to YouTube videos are given on page 80. These videos give detailed information on the temple, its history, activities, etc.
On page 81, Links to Books by Sri RY Deshpande (my mentor and guide in BARC from 1970's) are given.

Acknowledgements:

Many of my friends and relatives have actively encouraged me in my attempt to compile this free ebook. I sincerely thank them for their support.

My wife Kala has always encouraged and supported me in all my literary works, sacrificing much of her time. I express my deep appreciation to her.

I have drawn heavily from many references, viz. Wikipedia, Official website of the temple, and associated YouTube videos etc.

Finally, I express my immense gratitude to Sri Sathya Sai Baba for His Grace and blessings, prompting me to initiate, continue and complete this work.

M. Thirumaleshwar,

December 26, 2021

Email: tmuliya@rediffmail.com

Ref: Wikipedia

Sri Aurobindo Ashram

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram is a spiritual community (ashram) located in Pondicherry, in the Indian territory of Puducherry. The ashram grew out of a small community of disciples who had gathered around Sri Aurobindo after he retired from politics and settled in Pondicherry in 1910. On 24 November 1926, after a major spiritual realization, Sri Aurobindo withdrew from public view in order to continue his spiritual work. At this time he handed over the full responsibility for the inner and outer lives of the sadhaks (spiritual aspirants) and the ashram to his spiritual collaborator, "The Mother", earlier known as Mirra Alfassa. This date is therefore generally known as the founding-day of the ashram, though, as Sri Aurobindo himself wrote, it had "less been created than grown around him as its centre."[1]

History

Life in the community that preceded the ashram was informal. Sri Aurobindo spent most of his time in writing and meditation. The three or four young men who had followed him to Pondicherry in 1910 lived with him and looked after the household. Otherwise, they were free to do as they wished. The Mother and French writer Paul Richard met Sri Aurobindo in 1914 and proposed that they bring out a monthly review; but after the outbreak of World War I, they were obliged to leave India, and Sri Aurobindo had to do almost all of the work on the review himself, helped a little by the young men who were living with him. In April 1920 the Mother returned to Pondicherry, and soon the community began to take the form of an ashram, more because the sadhaks "desired to entrust their whole inner and outer life to the Mother than from any intention or plan of hers or of Sri Aurobindo."[2] After the ashram was given formal shape in 1926, it experienced a period of rapid growth, increasing from around 24 in the beginning of 1927 to more than 150 in 1934.[3] The membership leveled off in 1934 owing to a lack of suitable housing.

During these years there was a regular routine. At 6:00 every morning, the Mother appeared on the ashram balcony to initiate the day with her blessings. Sadhaks would have woken very early and completed a good portion of the day's work including meditation and then assembled under the balcony to receive her blessings.[4]

As the ashram grew, many departments came up and were looked after by the sadhaks as part of their sadhana: the offices, library, dining room, book/photograph printing, workshops, sports/playground, art gallery, dispensary/nursing home, farms, dairies, flower gardens, guest houses, laundry, bakery, etc. The heads of the departments met the Mother in the morning and took her blessings and orders. She would meet the sadhaks individually again at 10 am and, in the evening at 5:30 pm, she would conduct meditation and meet the sadhaks.

In addition, four times a year Sri Aurobindo and the Mother used to give public Darshans (spiritual gatherings where the guru bestows blessings) to thousands of devotees gathered to receive grace.

Present

Aurobindo Ashram

People waiting in a queue to get inside the ashram

Once confined to a few buildings in one corner of Pondicherry, the ashram's growth has caused it to expand physically in all directions. Today, Ashramites live and work in more than 400 buildings spread throughout the town. The central focus of the community is one group of houses, including those in which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother dwelt for most of their lives in Pondicherry. This interconnected block of houses—called "the Ashram main-building", or more usually just "the Ashram"—surrounds a tree-shaded courtyard, at the centre of which lies the flower-covered "Samadhi". This white marble shrine holds, in two separate chambers, the physical remains of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Today, Pondicherry has become an important destination for spiritual seekers as well as tourists. Thousands of visitors from all over the world come to the ashram.

The visiting hours for the visitors are from 8 am to 12 noon and then again from 2 pm to 6 pm.

Aims and ideals

The Ashram, according to Sri Aurobindo, "has been created with another object than that ordinarily common to such institutions, not for the renunciation of the world but as a centre and a field of practice for the evolution of another kind and form of life which would in the final end be moved by a higher spiritual consciousness and embody a greater life of the spirit."[5]

The practice of Integral Yoga, Sri Aurobindo explained, "does not proceed through any set mental teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, mantras or others, but by aspiration, by a self-concentration inwards or upwards, by self-opening to an Influence, to the Divine Power above us and its workings, to the Divine Presence in the heart, and by the rejection of all that is foreign to these things."[6]

There are many things belonging to older systems that are necessary on the way—an opening of the mind to a greater wideness and to the sense of the Self and the Infinite, an emergence into what has been called the cosmic consciousness, mastery over the desires and passions; an outward asceticism is not essential, but the conquest of desire and attachment and a control over the body and its needs, greeds and instincts are indispensable. There is a combination of the principles of the old systems, the way of knowledge through the mind's discernment between Reality and the appearance, the heart's way of devotion, love and surrender and the way of works turning the will away from motives of self-interest to the Truth and the service of a greater Reality than the ego. For the whole being has to be trained so that it can respond and be transformed when it is possible for that greater Light and Force to work in nature.

— Sri Aurobindo[7]

The complete method of Integral Yoga aims to transform human life into a divine life. In Sri Aurobindo's yoga, the highest aim is the state of being one with the Divine, without the renunciation of life in the world. For such a fulfilment of the consciousness, the urge for perfection must not be confined to a few individuals. There must be "a general spiritual awakening and aspiration in mankind" as well as "a dynamic re-creating of individual manhood in the spiritual type."[8] This would lead eventually to the emergence of a new type of being, the gnostic being, which "would be the hope of a more harmonious evolutionary order in terrestrial Nature".[9]

Publications

Sri Aurobindo Ashram is the primary publisher of the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. As of January 2015 it keeps some 200 publications in English in print, of which 78 are books by Sri Aurobindo, 44 books by the Mother, 27 compilations from their works, and 47 books by other authors. These books are printed at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, which has been in operation since the 1940s. They are distributed by SABDA, the Ashram's book distribution service, which has been in operation since the 1950s. SABDA also carries books relating to Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and their yoga brought out by other publishers, making the number of English books on their list more than 600. The Ashram also publishes books in 17 other European and Indian languages, for a total of more than 550 publications. SABDA carries these and other non-English titles: in all there are 1678 titles in 23 languages.

The photographs of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother are printed in-house and are available from Ashram Reception Service. Sizes are available to suit table-top to large wall frames.

Collected works

The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo (new edition) are being issued in 37 volumes, of which 36 have been published. The Collected Works of the Mother have been issued in 17 volumes.

Periodicals

The Ashram publishes a number of journals relating to the philosophy and yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. These are currently printed at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, though several were earlier brought out in other cities. Some of Sri Aurobindo's works first appeared in these and other journals, among them The Advent, a quarterly, which has recently ceased publication. The most important journals in English are:

- Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education (English-French, formerly Bulletin of Physical Education), quarterly, Pondicherry, since 1949
- Mother India (English), monthly, Pondicherry, since 1949

The Ashram press also prints several journals published by other organisations. These include:

- All India Magazine (English and other languages), monthly, Pondicherry
- Bartika (Bengali), quarterly, Calcutta, since 1942
- Srinvantu, quarterly, Calcutta, since 1956
- World Union (English), monthly, Pondicherry

Governance

During the early years of the community, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother imposed very few rules on the sadhaks, because they wished them to learn to direct their lives by looking for divine guidance within. After 1926, written rules were circulated. The main rules were an absolute prohibition of alcohol, drugs, sex and politics. There were also a number of guidelines for the smooth functioning of the collective life of the community. These rules were collected in Rules and Regulations of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, copies of which are given to all members.

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust was established in 1955 to administer the community and its assets. The trust board consists of five Trustees, the first of whom were chosen by the Mother herself. After her passing in 1973, the trustees have chosen replacements by consensus.

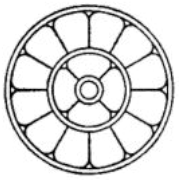
The main ashram departments are overseen by department heads who report to the Trustees.

The Ashram, a public charitable trust, is open to all. No distinctions of nationality, religion, caste, gender, or age are observed. Members come from every part of India and many foreign countries. A large number of devotees from Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu visit the Ashram every day, and support the activities of the Ashram in various ways. Many say that they have benefited from the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.[10] However, some feel that there is little mingling of ashramites and local people. According to a senior Ashram official, the practice of silence observed by the ashramites may have been misunderstood as rude behaviour.[11]

Controversy

In compliance with the Central Government's Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust constituted an Internal Complaints Committee in April 2014.[12]

In 2001, a female member was expelled from the ashram for violating a "mandatory rule".[13] Thereafter she filed charges of sexual harassment against various members. These charges were dismissed by committees and government agencies, all of which found the charges false.[14][15][16][17] The then chairperson of the National Commission for Women added that there "appeared to be malicious planning behind the complaints".[18]



Mother's symbol

Ashram

Ref: holidify.com

Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry Overview

Located in the White Town of Pondicherry, Aurobindo Ashram has been named after its creator- Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. The foundation of this ashram was laid on 24th November in the year 1926 when he was surrounded by his disciples all over after he retired from politics and settled in Pondicherry. This ashram was set up with the aim of helping people attain moksha and inner peace. Thousands of tourists from all over the country visit the ashram to experience and achieve spiritual knowledge. The ashram is by far one of the wealthiest ashrams in the world. Also, the ashram does not have any branches and solely exists in Pondicherry.

The day this ashram was set up is known as the founding day of the ashram which has been described by Sri Aurobindo in his writings as "less been created than grown around me as its centre". Mirra Alfassa who was one of Aurobindo's followers played a vital role in the establishment of the ashram. Soon after Sri Aurobindo Ghosh's death in 1950, she took care of the Aurobindo Ashram and was known as the 'Mother' of the ashram. At present, the Ashram has over five hundred devotees, five hundred students involved in the democratic progress school and thirteen hundred patients. All these people live in the Ashram's main building which comprises of a block of houses which are connected with each other. These houses are located nearby the ashram at walking distance.

Some of the facilities offered by the Ashram including the library and the main building can be accessed only after receiving a gate pass from the Bureau Central or guest houses of the Ashram. In addition to this, the ashram also has a spiritual centre which consists of four houses which were inhabited by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo for different intervals of time. There exists a samadhi as well in the courtyard under the frangipani tree where the bodies of Mother and Sri Aurobindo were buried. People come to pay their respect every day by laying flowers on it.

Facilities at Aurobindo Ashram

1. Collective meditations at Ashram- 7:25 PM - 7:50 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday (no pass required)

Collective meditation at playground- 7:45 PM - 8:15 PM on Thursday and Sunday (accessible to Ashramites and people residing in the guest houses only)

2. Meals in the dining hall

Breakfast- 6:30 AM - 8:00 AM

Lunch- 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Dinner- 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

(Can be accessed after obtaining a pass from Bureau Central)

3. Exhibition and Video programs at Bureau Central - An exhibition is organised as an introduction to the life of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother using their writings. It also gives an insight into the Ashram and the daily tasks undertaken within. Except for Sunday, a video presentation takes place on all the other days which depicts the life and literary works of Sri Aurobindo as well as the Mother, flowers and their significance, the Ashram and much more.

4. Tours - Two tours are provided every week by Autocare Services at 8:15 AM to witness the Ashram as well as other departments related to the Ashram. At 2:00 PM, Auroville is visited. The Auroville trip does not wait for the meditation (i.e. from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM) at the Matrimandir because first-time visitors are not allowed.

Best Time To Visit Aurobindo Ashram

The best time to visit the Aurobindo Ashram is during the winter months when the climate is pleasant and not sticky. The time between November and March is the most favourable. In addition to this, 15th August which is the birthday of Sri Aurobindo is another very busy time of the year for visiting the ashram.

Tips For Visiting Aurobindo Ashram

1. Cameras cannot be carried inside and the bags should be kept outside only.

2. Children below 3 years are not allowed inside the Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Detailed History of Aurobindo Ashram

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was a philosopher and poet who was born in Kolkata in 1872 and began practising yoga in 1905. Most of his time went in writing and meditation. He moved to Pondicherry after 5 years where he was followed by three or four very young men who believed in his ideals. These men lived with him and looked after the house. A French writer Paul Richard along with 'The Mother' met Aurobindo in 1914 and proposed a monthly review to him. However, after World War I, they had to leave India, and he had to take care of the review all by himself with a little help from the men staying with him. The Mother came back to Pondicherry in April 1920 when the community started turning into an Ashram because the 'Sadhaks' entrusted their inner and outer lives to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. After being established in 1926, the ashram witnessed a rapid growth from the headcount rising from 24 in 1927 to 150 in 1934.

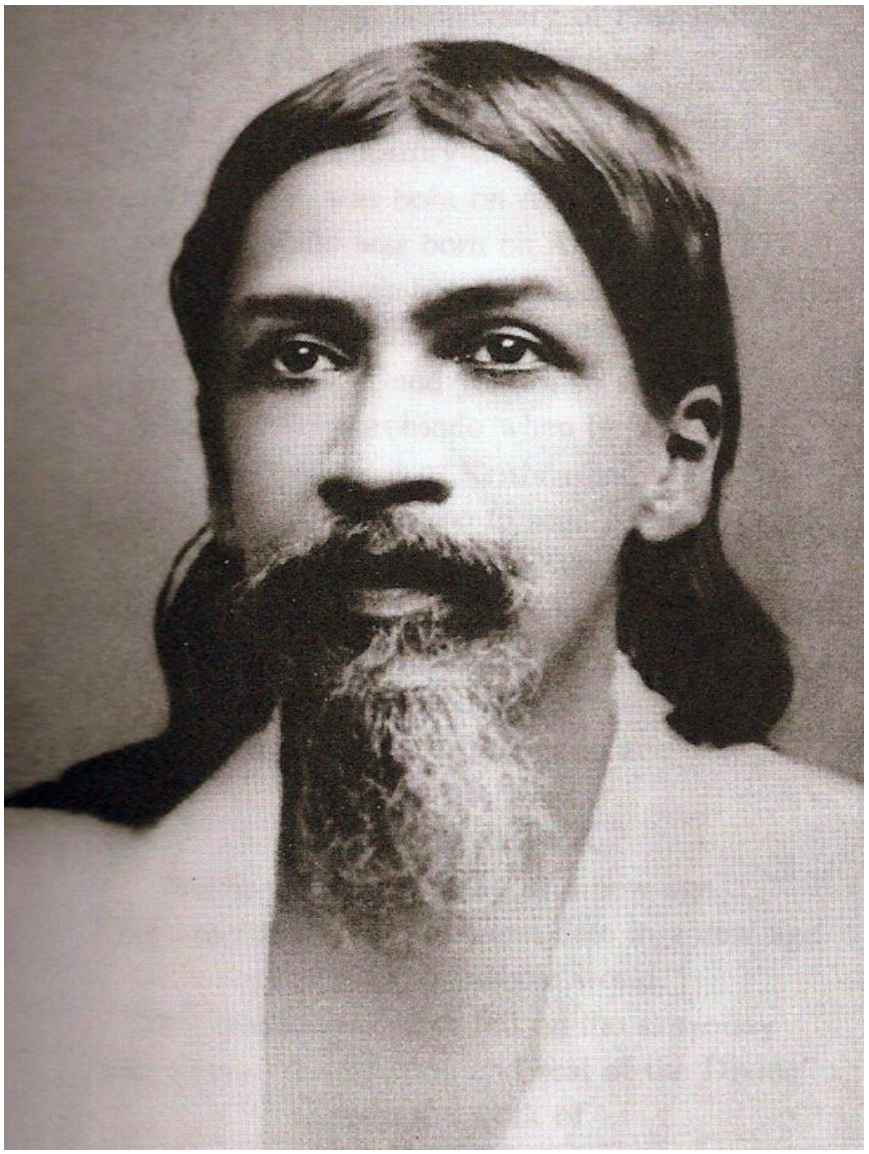
All those years, the Ashram followed a routine wherein at 6:00 in the morning, the Mother would appear on the balcony of the ashram to begin the day with her blessings. Sadhaks had to wake up very early and complete a part of the day's work along with meditation and then assemble under the balcony to receive her blessings. As the ashram kept on growing new departments kept on getting added including the library, dining room, printing,

workshops, offices, sports playground, nursing homes, farms etc. which were all looked after by the Sadhaks as a part of their Sadhana. Heads of the various departments met the Mother in the morning and took her blessings as well as her orders. She addressed the Sadhaks on an individual level at 10:00 AM and at 5:00 PM, she would conduct meditation and meet the Sadhaks again. Also, Sri Aurobindo, as well as the Mother, would go out and give public Darshan to all the devotees gathered so as to receive their blessings four times a year.

How To Reach Aurobindo Ashram

The Aurobindo Ashram is situated next to the Bay of Bengal in the eastern Pondicherry. It lies at a distance of 160 km in Southern Madras. One can easily hire a cab or take a local transport which moves to and fro at short intervals and reach the ashram.

Photos



Places To Visit In Pondicherry

Nearby places

Nearby Places

Sri Manakula Vinayagar Temple

Sri Karneshwar Nataraja Temple

Mahatma Gandhi Statue

Bharathi Park

Raj Niwas

Pondicherry Museum

Aayi Mandapam

Jawahar Toy Museum

Similar places

Similar Places

Auroville Ashram, Pondicherry

Auroville

Pondicherry Lighthouse

Jawahar Toy Museum

Arikamedu

Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Raj Niwas

French War Memorial

Ref: sriaurobindoashram.org

This is the official web site of the Ashram. It is very good, gives information quite systematically, and in good detail.

A View of Mother's room, with tree in full bloom

Ashram:

Introduction

Founded in 1926, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram has grown, under the Mother's guidance, from a small group of two dozen disciples into a large and diverse community of almost 1600 members. Counting the 400 students of the Centre of Education and the hundreds of devotees who live nearby, the larger ashram community consists of more than 2000 people.

The Ashram is located in the eastern part of Pondicherry. Inmates live and work in a number of buildings spread throughout the area. The focus of community life is the Ashram main building, usually called simply "the Ashram", which consists of an interconnected block of

houses, including those in which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother lived for most of their lives. At its centre, in a tree-shaded courtyard, lies the Samadhi, a white marble shrine where their bodies are laid to rest.

The Ashram provides its members with all they need for a decent and healthy life. Various departments look after the basic requirements of food, clothing and shelter, as well as medical care. There are also libraries for study and facilities for a variety of cultural pursuits including music, dance, theatre, and the arts. Members regularly participate in physical education activities such as sports, asanas, strength training, and swimming.

The Ashram is administered by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, a public charitable trust formed by the Mother in 1955. This trust is managed by a board of five trustees.

Organisation

Situated in a busy city of more than 700,000 people, the Ashram is not a quiet place of retreat but a vibrant centre of life in a modern urban setting. The dynamic character of the community reflects the life-affirming aim of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga: to manifest a higher consciousness here on earth by transforming human nature and all aspects of human activity. Work as an offering to the Divine is an essential aspect of the Yoga, and all ashramites work each day in one or another of the Ashram's numerous departments.

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram does not follow the tradition of a Guru succeeding the founders as the spiritual head of the ashram. Even after their lifetime, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo remain the Ashram's only gurus, the very reason for its existence. Their spiritual presence fills the atmosphere of the Ashram and sustains its ongoing work. Their written words, comprising more than fifty volumes, also act as guide and inspiration to the sadhaks.

In the sadhana or spiritual discipline at the Ashram, there are no obligatory practices, no rituals, no compulsory meditations or systematic instructions in Yoga. Sadhaks are left free to determine the course and pace of their sadhana according to the path that best suits their own natures. But the general principle of the sadhana is the same for all: there must be a surrender to the Divine and an opening to the Divine Force so that it may work to transform one's being.

Departments

The Ashram consists of over 80 departments which include farms, gardens, healthcare, guesthouses and engineering units among many others. Most of these departments have emerged spontaneously, sometimes because of a need for a product or service that wasn't available, often because the Mother encouraged a sadhak to pursue his art. Under Her personal guidance and care, these small units soon grew up into well-established departments.
While externally they help sustain the Ashram, the real purpose of these units is to serve as a field for sadhana, the spiritual discipline. Work in the Ashram is to be done unselfishly, in the spirit of service and as a means of offering oneself to the Divine.
For more details, see the web site.

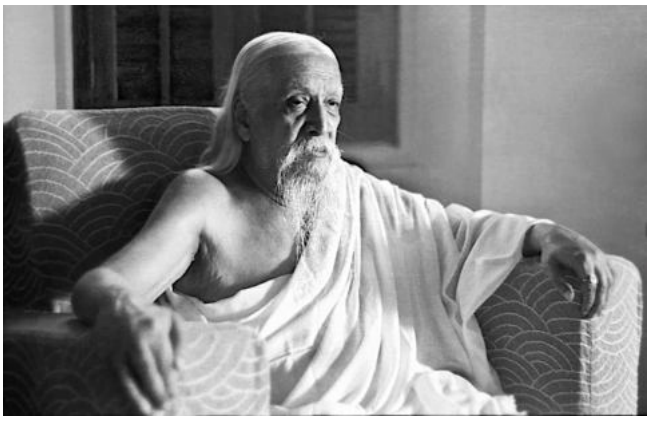
Centre of Education

Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, an integral part of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, serves as a field for experiment and research in education. For years Sri Aurobindo considered the formation of a new system of education as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to manifest upon earth a divine consciousness and a divine life. To give a concrete shape to his vision, the Mother opened a school for children on December 2, 1943. Since then, the school has continued to grow and experiment with various educational problems and issues. In 1951, a Convention was held at Pondicherry which resolved to establish an International University Centre in the town as a fitting memorial to Sri Aurobindo. Accordingly, the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre was inaugurated by the Mother on January 6, 1952. In 1959, the Mother decided to rename it the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

Again, for more details, see the web site.

Sri Aurobindo:

Introduction



Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on 15 August 1872. At the age of seven he was taken to England for education. There he studied at St. Paul's School, London, and at King's College, Cambridge. Returning to India in 1893, he worked for the next thirteen years in the Princely State of Baroda in the service of the Maharaja and as a professor in Baroda College. During this period he also joined a revolutionary society and took a leading role in secret preparations for an uprising against the British Government in India.

In 1906, soon after the Partition of Bengal, Sri Aurobindo quit his post in Baroda and went to Calcutta, where he soon became one of the leaders of the Nationalist movement. He was the first political leader in India to openly put forward, in his newspaper Bande Mataram, the idea of complete independence for the country. Prosecuted twice for sedition and once for conspiracy, he was released each time for lack of evidence.

Sri Aurobindo had begun the practice of Yoga in 1905 in Baroda. In 1908 he had the first of several fundamental spiritual realisations. In 1910 he withdrew from politics and went to Pondicherry in order to devote himself entirely to his inner spiritual life and work. During his forty years in Pondicherry he evolved a new method of spiritual practice, which he called the Integral Yoga. Its aim is a spiritual realisation that not only liberates man's consciousness but also transforms his nature. In 1926, with the help of his spiritual collaborator, the Mother, he founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Among his many writings are The Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga and Savitri. Sri Aurobindo left his body on 5 December 1950.

Life sketch

Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on 15 August, 1872. In 1879, at the age of seven, he was taken with his two elder brothers to England for education and lived there for fourteen years. Brought up at first in an English family at Manchester, he joined St. Paul's School in London in 1884 and in 1890 went from it with a senior classical scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, where he studied for two years. In 1890 he passed also the open competition for the Indian Civil Service, but at the end of two years of probation failed to present himself at the riding examination and was disqualified for the Service. At this time the Gaekwar of

Baroda was in London. Sri Aurobindo saw him, obtained an appointment in the Baroda Service and left England for India, arriving there in February, 1893.

Sri Aurobindo passed thirteen years, from 1893 to 1906, in the Baroda Service, first in the Revenue Department and in secretariate work for the Maharaja, afterwards as Professor of English and, finally, Vice-Principal in the Baroda College. These were years of self-culture, of literary activity -- for much of the poetry afterwards published from Pondicherry was written at this time -- and of preparation for his future work. In England he had received, according to his father's express instructions, an entirely occidental education without any contact with the culture of India and the East. [1] At Baroda he made up the deficiency, learned Sanskrit and several modern Indian languages, assimilated the spirit of Indian civilisation and its forms past and present. A great part of the last years of this period was spent on leave in silent political activity, for he was debarred from public action by his position at Baroda. The outbreak of the agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905 gave him the opportunity to give up the Baroda Service and join openly in the political movement. He left Baroda in 1906 and went to Calcutta as Principal of the newly-founded Bengal National College.

The political action of Sri Aurobindo covered eight years, from 1902 to 1910. During the first half of this period he worked behind the scenes, preparing with other co-workers the beginnings of the Swadeshi (Indian Sinn Fein) movement, till the agitation in Bengal furnished an opening for the public initiation of a more forward and direct political action than the moderate reformism which had till then been the creed of the Indian National Congress. In 1906 Sri Aurobindo came to Bengal with this purpose and joined the New Party, an advanced section small in numbers and not yet strong in influence, which had been recently formed in the Congress. The political theory of this party was a rather vague gospel of Non-cooperation; in action it had not yet gone farther than some ineffective clashes with the Moderate leaders at the annual Congress assembly behind the veil of secrecy of the "Subjects Committee". Sri Aurobindo persuaded its chiefs in Bengal to come forward publicly as an All-India party with a definite and challenging programme, putting forward Tilak, the popular Maratha leader at its head, and to attack the then dominant Moderate (Reformist or Liberal) oligarchy of veteran politicians and capture from them the Congress and the country. This was the origin of the historic struggle between the Moderates and the Nationalists (called by their opponents Extremists) which in two years changed altogether the face of Indian politics.

The new-born Nationalist party put forward Swaraj (independence) as its goal as against the far-off Moderate hope of colonial self-government to be realised at a distant date of a century or two by a slow progress of reform; it proposed as its means of execution a programme which resembled in spirit, though not in its details, the policy of Sinn Fein developed some years later and carried to a successful issue in Ireland. The principle of this new policy was self-help; it aimed on one side at an effective organisation of the forces of the nation and on the other professed a complete non-cooperation with the Government. Boycott of British and foreign goods and the fostering of Swadeshi industries to replace them, boycott of British law courts, and the foundation of a system of Arbitration courts in their stead, boycott of Government universities and colleges and the creation of a network of National colleges and schools, the formation of societies of young men which would do the work of police and defence and, wherever necessary, a policy of passive resistance were among the immediate items of the programme. Sri Aurobindo hoped to capture the Congress and make it the

directing centre of an organised national action, an informal State within the State, which would carry on the struggle for freedom till it was won. He persuaded the party to take up and finance as its recognised organ the newly-founded daily paper, Bande Mataram, of which he was at the time acting editor. The Bande Mataram, whose policy from the beginning of 1907 till its abrupt winding up in 1908 when Sri Aurobindo was in prison was wholly directed by him, circulated almost immediately all over India. During its brief but momentous existence it changed the political thought of India which has ever since preserved fundamentally, even amidst its later developments, the stamp then imparted to it. But the struggle initiated on these lines, though vehement and eventful and full of importance for the future, did not last long at the time; for the country was still unripe for so bold a programme.

Sri Aurobindo was prosecuted for sedition in 1907 and acquitted. Up till now an organiser and writer, he was obliged by this event and by the imprisonment or disappearance of other leaders to come forward as the acknowledged head of the party in Bengal and to appear on the platform for the first time as a speaker. He presided over the Nationalist Conference at Surat in 1907 where in the forceful clash of two equal parties the Congress was broken to pieces. In May, 1908, he was arrested in the Alipore Conspiracy Case as implicated in the doings of the revolutionary group led by his brother Barindra; but no evidence of any value could be established against him and in this case too he was acquitted. After a detention of one year as undertrial prisoner in the Alipore Jail, he came out in May, 1909, to find the party organisation broken, its leaders scattered by imprisonment, deportation or self-imposed exile and the party itself still existent but dumb and dispirited and incapable of any strenuous action. For almost a year he strove single-handed as the sole remaining leader of the Nationalists in India to revive the movement. He published at this time to aid his effort a weekly English paper, the Karmayogin, and a Bengali weekly, the Dharma. But at last he was compelled to recognise that the nation was not yet sufficiently trained to carry out his policy and programme. For a time he thought that the necessary training must first be given through a less advanced Home Rule movement or an agitation of passive resistance of the kind created by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa. But he saw that the hour of these movements had not come and that he himself was not their destined leader. Moreover, since his twelve months' detention in the Alipore Jail, which had been spent entirely in practice of Yoga, his inner spiritual life was pressing upon him for an exclusve concentration. He resolved therefore to withdraw from the political field, at least for a time. [2]

In February, 1910, he withdrew to a secret retirement at Chandernagore and in the beginning of April sailed for Pondicherry in French India. A third prosecution was launched against him at this moment for a signed article in the Karmayogin; in his absence it was pressed against the printer of the paper who was convicted, but the conviction was quashed on appeal in the High Court of Calcutta. For the third time a prosecution against him had failed. Sri Aurobindo had left Bengal with some intention of returning to the political field under more favourable circumstances; but very soon the magnitude of the spiritual work he had taken up appeared to him and he saw that it would need the exclusive concentration of all his energies. Eventually he cut off connection with politics, refused repeatedly to accept the Presidentship of the National Congress and went into a complete retirement. During all his stay at Pondicherry from 1910 onward he remained more and more exclusively devoted to his spiritual work and his sadhana.

In 1914 after four years of silent Yoga he began the publication of a philosophical monthly, the Arya. Most of his more important works, The Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga, Essays on the Gita, The Isha Upanishad, appeared serially in the Arya. These works embodied much of the inner knowledge that had come to him in his practice of Yoga. Others were concerned with the spirit and significance of Indian civilisation and culture (The Foundations of Indian Culture), the true meaning of the Vedas (The Secret of the Veda), the progress of human society (The Human Cycle), the nature and evolution of poetry (The Future Poetry), the possibility of the unification of the human race (The Ideal of Human Unity). At this time also he began to publish his poems, both those written in England and at Baroda and those, fewer in number, added during his period of political activity and in the first years of his residence at Pondicherry. The Arya ceased publication in 1921 after six years and a half of uninterrupted appearance. Sri Aurobindo lived at first in retirement at Pondicherry with four or five disciples. Afterwards more and yet more began to come to him to follow his spiritual path and the number became so large that a community of sadhaks had to be formed for the maintenance and collective guidance of those who had left everything behind for the sake of a higher life. This was the foundation of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram which has less been created than grown around him as its centre.

Sri Aurobindo began his practice of Yoga in 1904. At first gathering into it the essential elements of spiritual experience that are gained by the paths of divine communion and spiritual realisation followed till now in India, he passed on in search of a more complete experience uniting and harmonising the two ends of existence, Spirit and Matter. Most ways of Yoga are paths to the Beyond leading to the Spirit and, in the end, away from life; Sri Aurobindo's rises to the Spirit to redescend with its gains bringing the light and power and bliss of the Spirit into life to transform it. Man's present existence in the material world is in this view or vision of things a life in the Ignorance with the Inconscient at its base, but even in its darkness and nescience there are involved the presence and possibilities of the Divine. The created world is not a mistake or a vanity and illusion to be cast aside by the soul returning to heaven or Nirvana, but the scene of a spiritual evolution by which out of this material inconscience is to be manifested progressively the Divine Consciousness in things. Mind is the highest term yet reached in the evolution, but it is not the highest of which it is capable. There is above it a Supermind or eternal Truth-Consciousness which is in its nature the self-aware and self-determining light and power of a Divine Knowledge. Mind is an ignorance seeking after Truth, but this is a self-existent Knowledge harmoniously manifesting the play of its forms and forces. It is only by the descent of this supermind that the perfection dreamed of by all that is highest in humanity can come. It is possible by opening to a greater divine consciousness to rise to this power of light and bliss, discover one's true self, remain in constant union with the Divine and bring down the supramental Force for the transformation of mind and life and body. To realise this possibility has been the dynamic aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo left his body on December 5, 1950. The Mother carried on his work until November 17, 1973. Their work continues.

NOTES

It may be observed that Sri Aurobindo's education in England gave him a wide introduction to the culture of ancient, of mediaeval and of modern Europe. He was a brilliant scholar in Greek and Latin. He had learned French from his childhood in Manchester and studied for

himself German and Italian sufficiently to study Goethe and Dante in the original tongues. (He passed the Tripos in Cambridge in the first class and obtained record marks in Greek and Latin in the examination for the Indian Civil Service.)

For a more complete statement about Sri Aurobindo's political life see SABCL Volume 26, On Himself, pp. 21-41.

Writings

In 1997, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram began to publish the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo in a uniform library edition of 37 volumes. All the 36 text volumes have been issued. The remaining reference volume, with an index and glossary, is being prepared. The Complete Works contains all the writings published earlier in the 30-volume Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, as well as around 4000 pages of new texts.

Each of the 36 published volumes can be viewed and downloaded in PDF format. At the end of the list below is a zipped file containing all the PDFs available for download.

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See the web site to download all volumes in pdf format.

The Mother

Introduction

The Mother was born Mirra Alfassa in Paris on 21 February 1878. A pupil at the Academie Julian, she became an accomplished artist, and also excelled as a pianist and writer. Interested in occultism, she visited Tlemcen, Algeria, in 1905 and l906 to study with the adept Max Theon and his wife. Her primary interest, however, was spiritual development. In Paris she founded a group of spiritual seekers and gave talks to various groups.

In 1914 the Mother voyaged to Pondicherry to meet Sri Aurobindo, whom she at once recognised as the one who for many years had inwardly guided her spiritual development. After a stay of eleven months she was obliged to return to France due to the outbreak of the First World War. A year later she went to Japan for a period of four years.

In April 1920 the Mother rejoined Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. When the Sri Aurobindo Ashram was formed in November 1926, Sri Aurobindo entrusted its full material and spiritual charge to the Mother. Under her guidance, which continued for nearly fifty years, the Ashram grew into a large, many-faceted spiritual community. In 1952 she established Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, and in 1968 an international township, Auroville.

The Mother left her body on 17 November 1973.

Mother on herself:

The following quotes are from Collected Works of the Mother. Volume and page number follow each quotation.

When and how did I become conscious of a mission which I was to fulfill on earth? And when and how I met Sri Aurobindo?

These two questions you have asked me and I promised a short reply.

For the knowledge of the mission, it is difficult to say when it came to me. It is as though I were born with it, and following the growth of the mind and brain, the precision and completeness of this consciousness grew also.

Between 11 and 13 a series of psychic and spiritual experiences revealed to me not only the existence of God but man's possibility of uniting with Him, of realising Him integrally in consciousness and action, of manifesting Him upon earth in a life divine. This, along with a practical discipline for its fulfilment, was given to me during my body's sleep by several teachers, some of whom I met afterwards on the physical plane.

Later on, as the interior and exterior development proceeded, the spiritual and psychic relation with one of these beings became more and more clear and frequent; and although I knew little of the Indian philosophies and religions at that time I was led to call him Krishna, and henceforth I was aware that it was with him (whom I knew I should meet on earth one day) that the divine work was to be done.

In the year 1910 my husband came alone to Pondicherry where, under very interesting and peculiar circumstances, he made the acquaintance of Sri Aurobindo. Since then we both strongly wished to return to India -- the country which I had always cherished as my true mother-country. And in 1914 this joy was granted to us.

As soon as I saw Sri Aurobindo I recognised in him the well-known being whom I used to call Krishna.... And this is enough to explain why I am fully convinced that my place and my work are near him, in India.

from Volume 13, Words of the Mother, p.38
Pondicherry, 1920)

MYSELF

I belong to no nation, no civilisation, no society, no race, but to the Divine.

I obey no master, no ruler, no law, no social convention, but the Divine.

To Him I have surrendered all, will, life and self; for Him I am ready to give all my blood, drop by drop, if such is His Will, with complete joy; and nothing in His service can be sacrifice, for all is perfect delight.

from Volume 2, Words of Long Ago, p.166
(February, 1920, Japan)

...The most important thing for an individual is to unify himself around his divine centre; in that way he becomes a true individual, master of himself and his destiny. Otherwise, he is a plaything of forces that toss him about like a piece of cork on a river.... It is a rather unpleasant sensation to feel yourself pulled by the strings and made to do things whether you want to or not -- that is quite irrelevant -- but to be compelled to act because something pulls you by the strings, something which you do not even see -- that is exasperating. However, I do not know, but I found it very exasperating, even when I was quite a child. At five, it began to seem to me quite intolerable and I sought for a way so that it might be otherwise -- without people getting a chance to scold me. For I knew nobody who could help me and I did not have the chance that you have, someone who can tell you "This is what you have to do!" There was nobody to tell me that. I had to find it out all by myself. And I found it. I started at five.

from Volume 5, Questions and Answers 1953, p.139
(1 July 1953)

For example, once when I was walking in the mountains, I was on a path where there was only room for one -- on one side the precipice, on the other sheer rock. There were three children behind me and a fourth person bringing up the rear. I was leading. The path ran along the edge of the rock; we could not see where we were going -- and besides, it was very dangerous; if anyone had slipped, he would have been over the edge. I was walking in front when suddenly I saw, with other eyes than these -- although I was watching my steps carefully -- I saw a snake, there, on the rock, waiting on the other side. Then I took one step, gently, and indeed on the other side there was a snake. That spared me the shock of surprise, because I had seen and I was advancing cautiously; and as there was no shock of surprise, I was able to tell the children without giving them a shock, "Stop, keep quiet, don't stir."

from Volume 10, On Thoughts and Aphorisms, p.131

At the beginning of my present earthly existence I came into contact with many people who said that they had a great inner aspiration, an urge towards something deeper and truer, but that they were tied down, subjected, slaves to that brutal necessity of earning their living, and that this weighed them down so much, took up so much of their time and energy that they could not engage in any other activity, inner or outer. I heard this very often, I saw many poor people -- I don't mean poor from the monetary point of view, but poor because they felt imprisoned in a material necessity, narrow and deadening.

I was very young at that time, and I always used to tell myself that if ever I could do it, I would try to create a little world -- oh! quite a small one, but still... a small world where people would be able to live without having to be preoccupied with food and lodging and clothing and the imperative necessities of life, so as to see whether all the energies freed by this certainty of a secure material living would turn spontaneously towards the divine life and the inner realisation.

from Volume 8, Questions and Answers 1956, p.161
(30 May 1956)

Sri Aurobindo on Mother:

The following quotes are from Volume 25, "The Mother", of Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library.

There is one divine Force which acts in the universe and in the individual and is also beyond the individual and the universe. The Mother stands for all these, but she is working here in the body to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world so as to transform life here -- it is so that you should regard her as the Divine Shakti working here for that purpose. She is that in the body, but in her whole consciousness she is also identified with all the other aspects of the Divine.

p. 49-50

Q: There are some Prayers of the Mother of 1914 in which she speaks of transformation and manifestation. Since at that time she was not here, does this not mean that she had these ideas long before she came here?

A: The Mother had been spiritually conscious from her youth, even from her childhood upward and she had done Sadhana and had developed this knowledge very long before she came to India.

p.384 (23-12-1933)

The Mother's presence is always there; but if you decide to act on your own -- your own idea, your own notion of things, your own will and demand upon things, then it is quite likely that her presence will get veiled; it is not she who withdraws from you, but you who draw back from her.

p. 117 (25-3-1932)

You have only to aspire, to keep yourself open to the Mother, to reject all that is contrary to her will and to let her work in you -- doing also all your work for her and in the faith that it is through her force that you can do it. If you remain open in this way, the knowledge and realisation will come to you in due course.

p. 122

The Mother's Force is not only above on the summit of the being. It is there with you and near you, ready to act whenever your nature will allow it. It is so with everybody here.

p. 157 (15-11-1936)

The lights are the Mother's Powers -- many in number. The white light is her own characteristic power, that of the Divine Consciousness in its essence.

p. 83 (15-7-1934)

Mother's writings:

The 17-volume Collected Works consists of nine volumes of talks and eight volumes of writings (prayers, reflections, essays, sayings, letters and personal notes). Most of the material was written or spoken in French and appear here in translation. The text on this website is that of the second edition; it is textually the same as the first edition (excepting a few minor corrections), but differs in page numbering.

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See the web site to read / download the above books.

In media section of website, you can download following two important videos:

JOURNEY TO THE LIFE DIVINE — PART I

A two part docu-feature on the lives of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and the formation of the Ashram.

Part I covers the lives of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and circumstances leading to the founding of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

JOURNEY TO THE LIFE DIVINE — PART II

Part II depicts the evolution of the Ashram in its diverse fields of activities with the goal of establishing the divine life upon earth as envisaged by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

SAVITRI is the epic poem..Magnum opus of Sri Aurobindo, which he wrote and rewrote several times to perfect it. It is available on Google books:

Aurobindo Ghose, Sri Aurobindo
Lotus Press, 1995 - Philosophy - 825 pages

In this epic spiritual poem, Sri Aurobindo reveals his vision of mankind's destiny within the universal evolution. He sets forth the optimistic view that life on earth has a purpose, and he places our travail within the context of this purpose: to participate in the evolution of consciousness that represents the secret thread behind life on Earth.

Link:
Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol - Aurobindo Ghose, Sri Aurobindo - Google Books

https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Savitri.html?id=-uNwCQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&hl=en&newbks=1&newbks_redir=1&redir_esc=y

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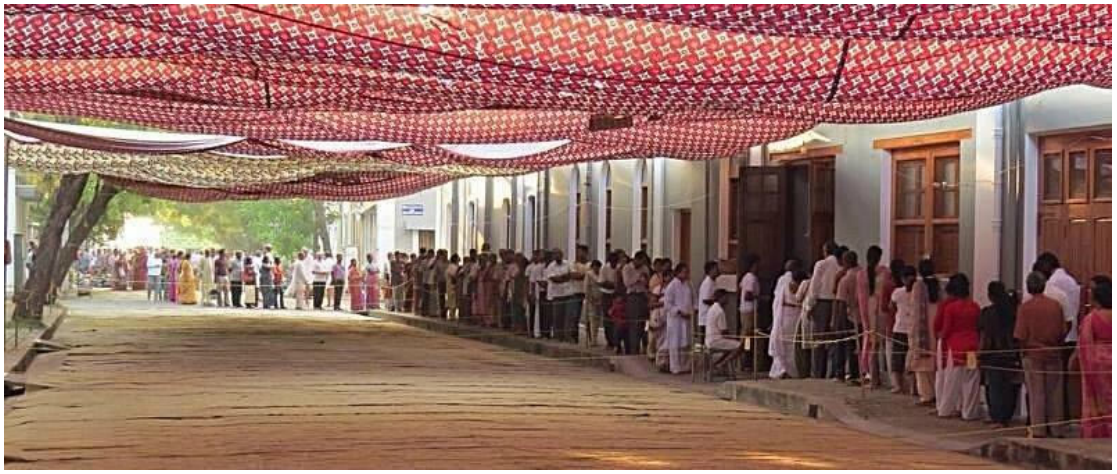

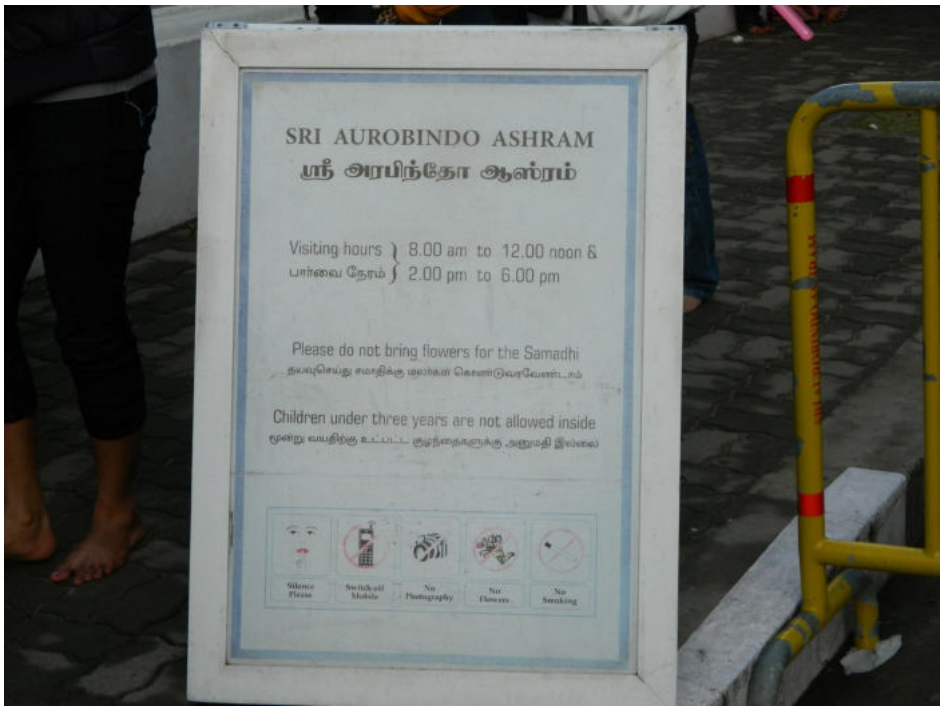
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Children under three years are not allowed inside
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TRAFFIC POLICE

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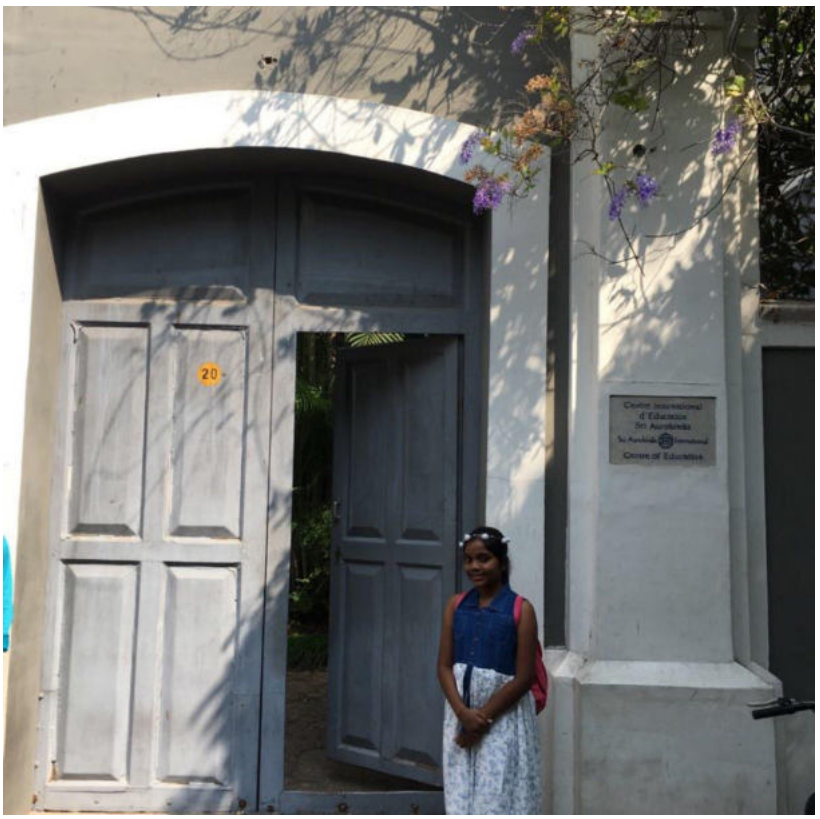
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ஸ்ரீ அரவிந்தோ ஆஸ்ரமம்
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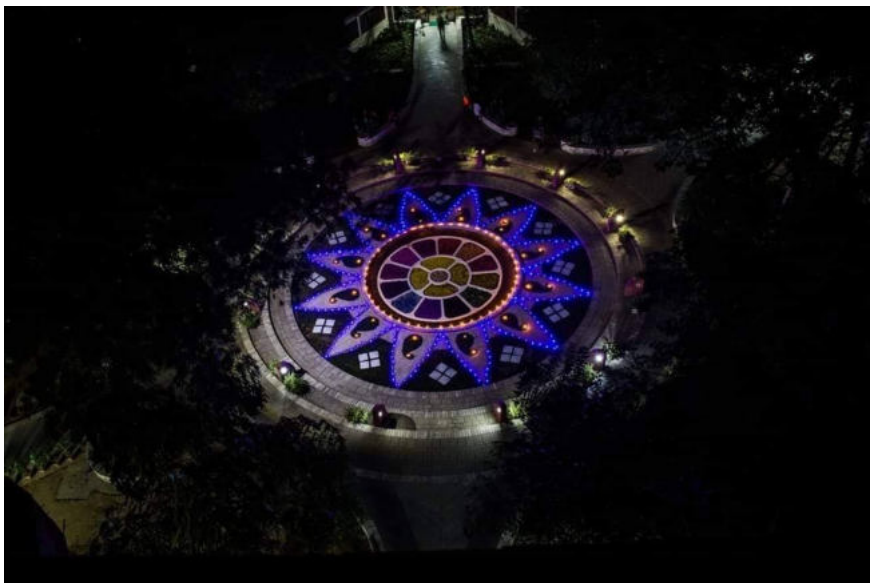

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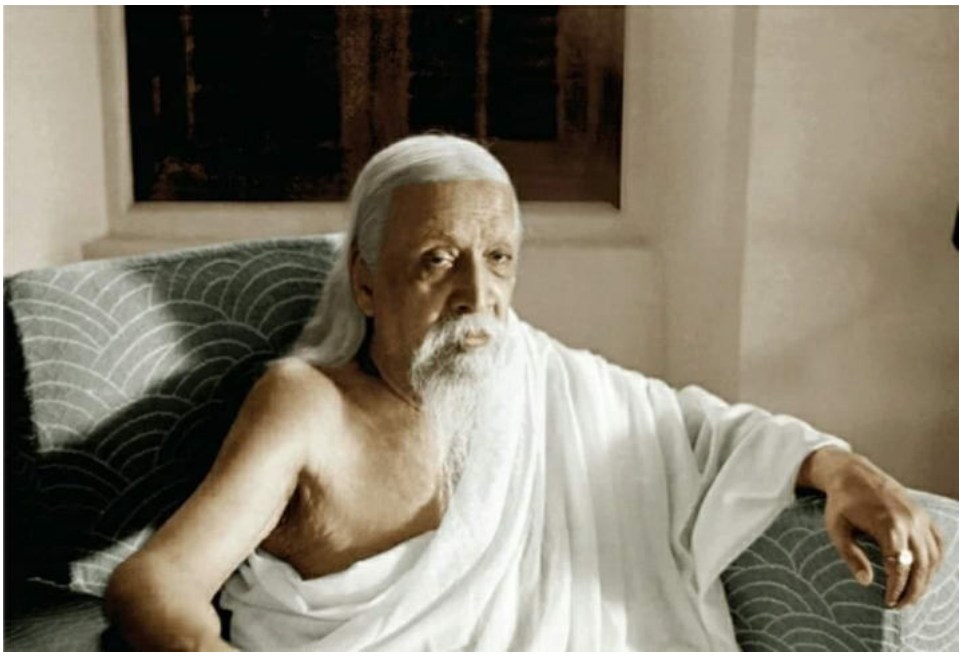


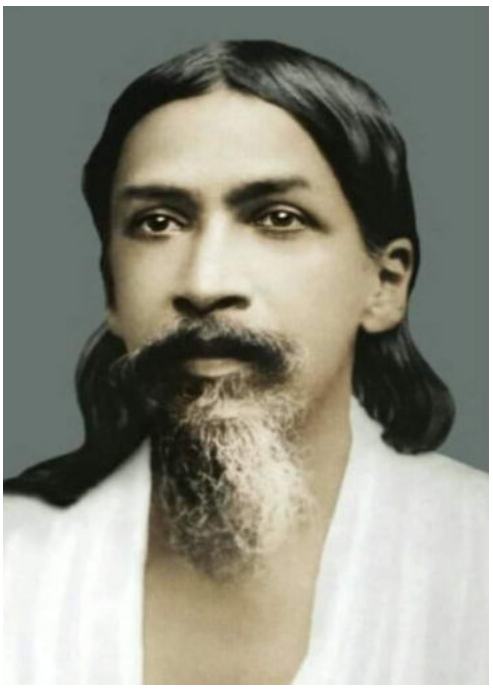
Gardez la foi dans votre destinée spirituelle, renoncez à vos erreurs et ouvrez davantage votre être psychique afin d'être guidé directement par la lumière et le pouvoir de la Mère. Si votre volonté centrale est sincère, chaque erreur, une fois reconnue, deviendra un tremplin vers un mouvement plus vrai et un plus grand progrès.

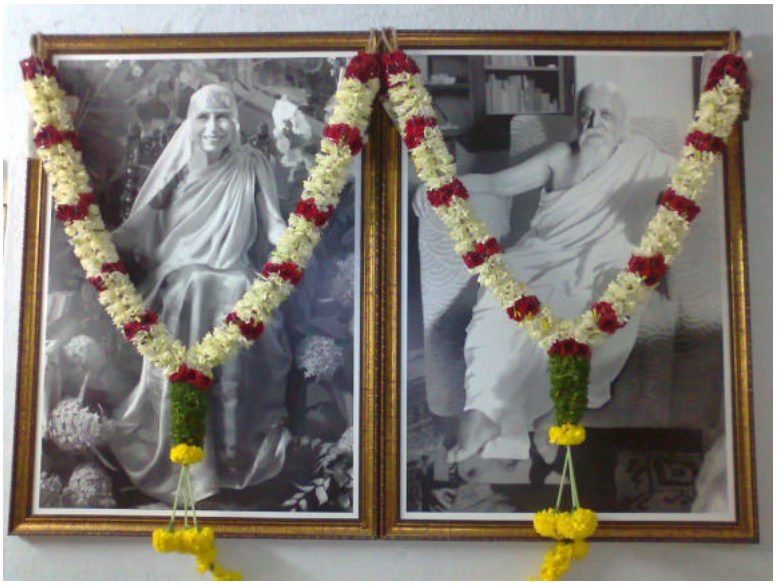
Sri Aurobindo

17 November 2019

Keep faith in your spiritual destiny, draw back from error and open more the psychic being to the direct guidance of the Mother's light and power. If the central will is sincere, each recognition of a mistake can become a stepping-stone to a truer movement and a higher progress.

Sri Aurobindo





135
Happy Birthday
The MOTHER

HEALTH
For the name of the Mother
For the sake of The Mother
By the power of The Mother
With the strength of The Mother
to all adverse harmful
being or force
I order to quit this
place at once and
for ever.
PROTECTION
Let us give ourselves entirely and sincerely to the Divine and we shall enjoy His protection.
In Search of The Mother

24 April 1956

The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality. It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.

The Mother

CWM, VOL-15, P-184

A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

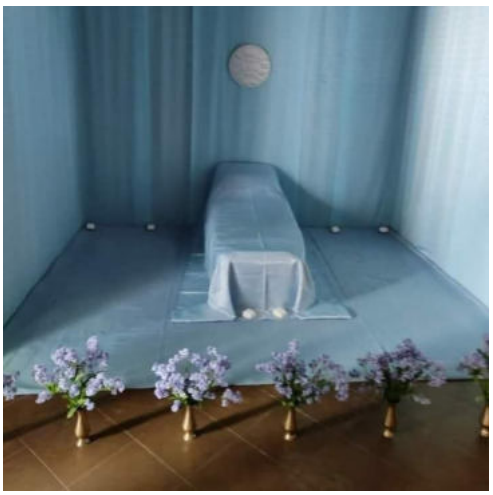
We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

— The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

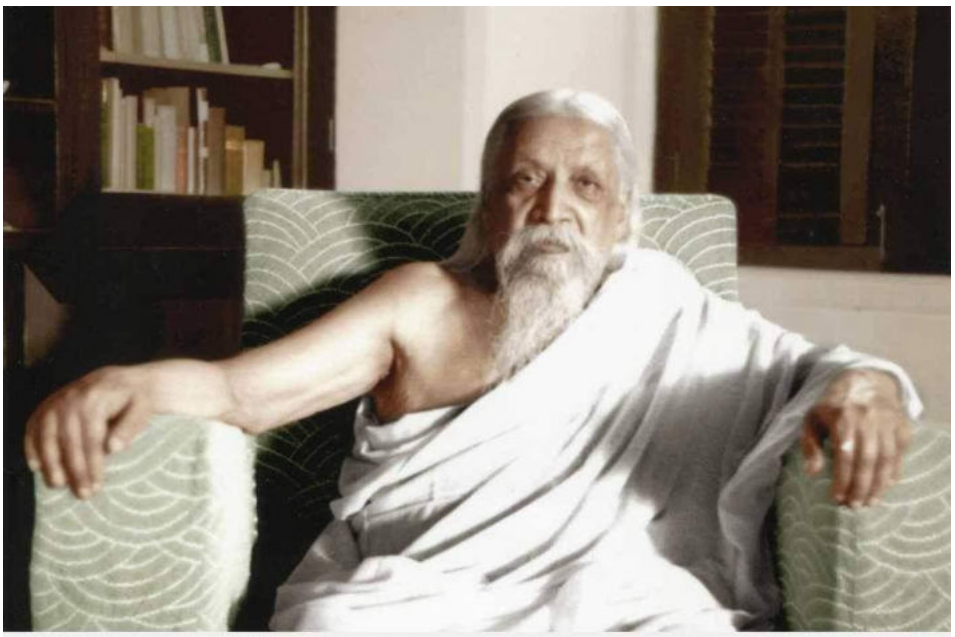
46 years ago

20.11.1974 ~ Meditation around the Samadhi



O Lord, this being made of dust prostrates itself before Thee praying to be consumed with the fire of the Truth that it may henceforth manifest only Thee.-The Mother

Prayers And Meditations, Feb 15, 1915

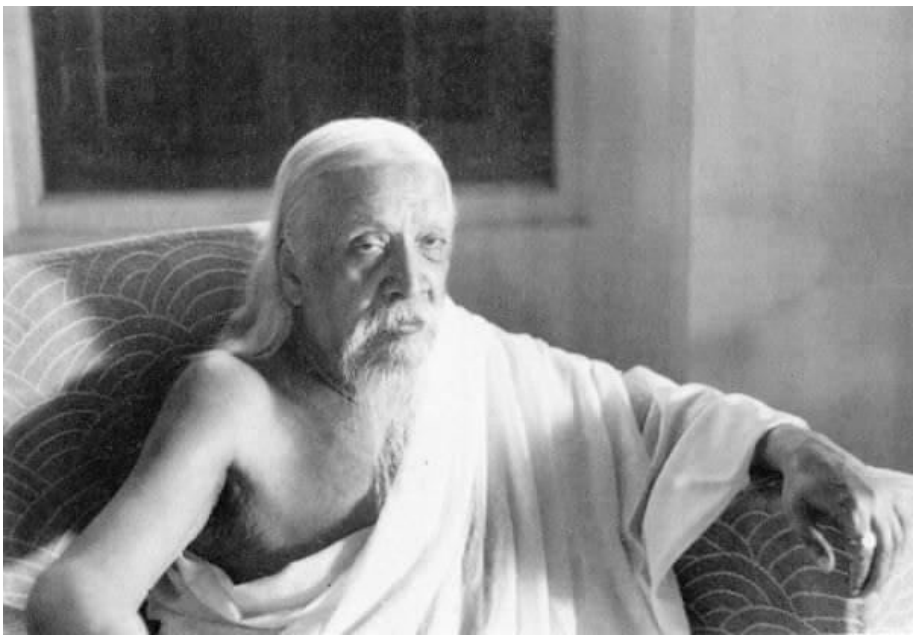


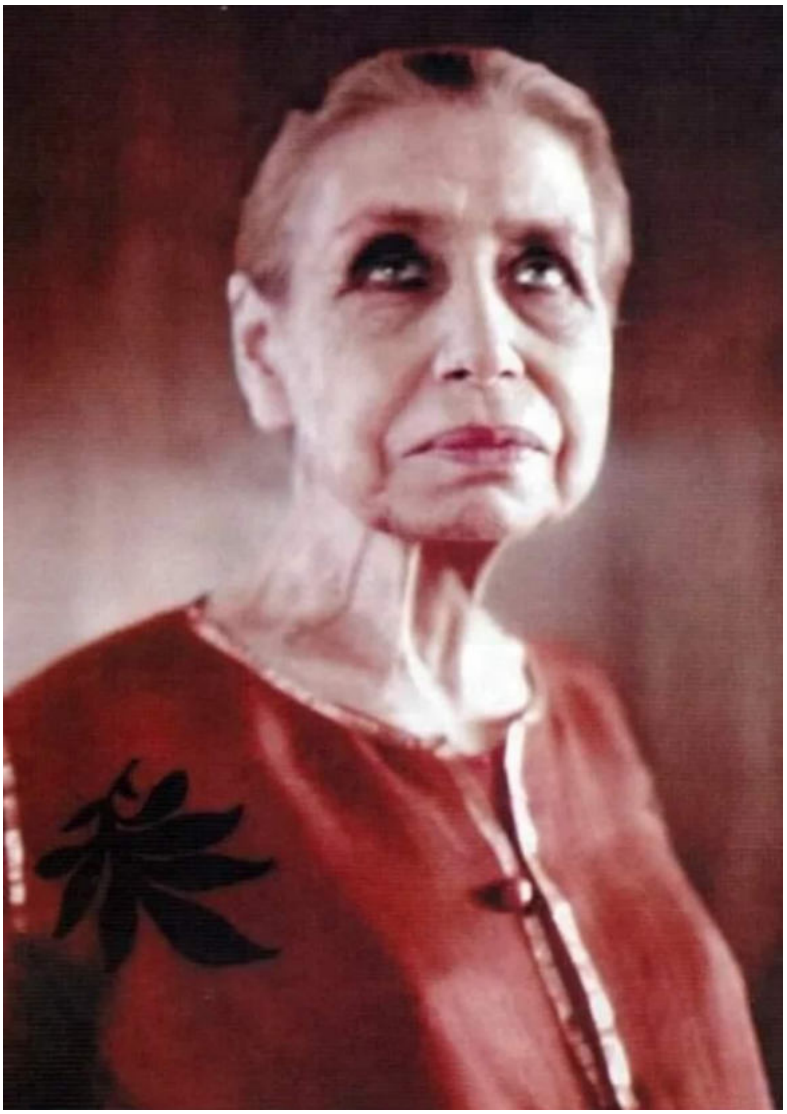
SAVITRI - A LINE A DAY

It stirred in the lotus of her throat of song,
And in her speech throbbed the immortal Word,
Her life sounded with the steps of the world-soul
Moving in harmony with the cosmic Thought.

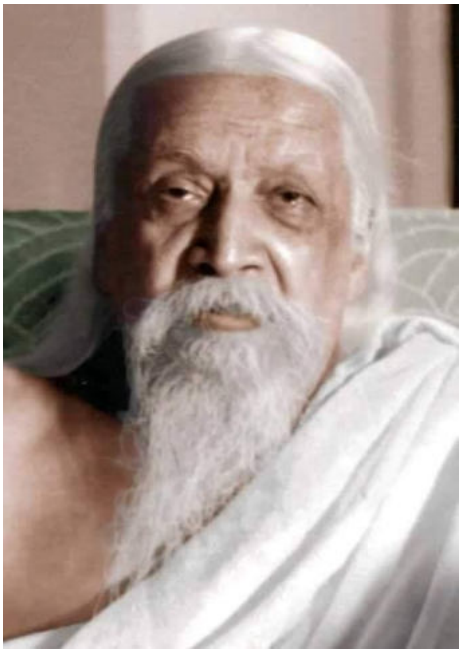
Savitri, Book X Canto IV

Shared from My Sadhana Desk App.



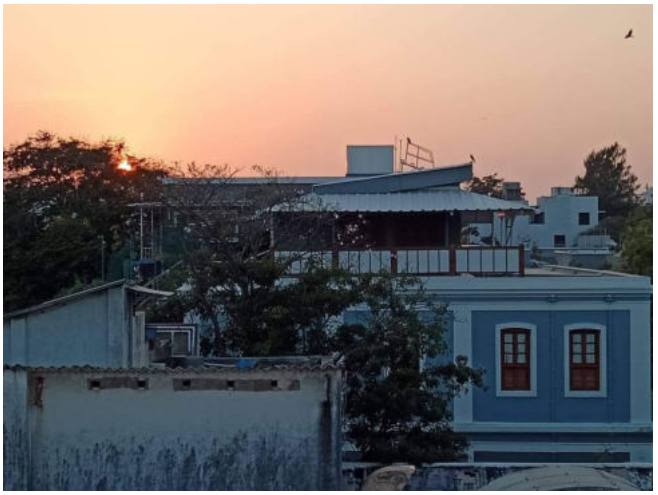


Sri Aurobindo at Uttarpara



Centenary
of the Mother's
return to
Pondicherry

24 April 1920 – 2020



MOTHER'S Terrace - a pair of Peacocks (symbol of Victory)
@ 9.41am 24.3.2020

YouTube Videos:

Sri Aurobindo Ashram-a documentary (from 1970's): https://youtu.be/aOprTKq-CpE

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry: https://youtu.be/lSuGtCNfMh8

Sri Aurobindo and Auroville: https://youtu.be/cPRzPgoF6i8

People visit Sri Aurobindo Ashram: https://youtu.be/Nz6Tteu7tOk

Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville in 1971: https://youtu.be/q0BJMlVtsY8

Visitors at the Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry: https://youtu.be/bnu1dbtdG7I

Pondicherry Auroville...etc: https://youtu.be/epq3bGqcics

Sri Aurobindo Ashram Matrimandir: https://youtu.be/JZgLsVf_2rI

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Mother, devotional songs etc: https://youtu.be/waCP_pPLPNo

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-5-4-2020: https://youtu.be/X4ILAfqSb0Q

Centenary of Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry, 24th April 2020: https://youtu.be/dOFNAEOQICg

Pondicherry trip after lockdown: https://youtu.be/opQC1mCIa-c

Unknown facts about Sri Aurobindo Ashram (in Tamil): https://youtu.be/YFa0FdN7eAE

Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry on 24-4-1920: https://youtu.be/ghdlgJ_1dPo

Four chapters of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry- a 1952 documentary: https://youtu.be/U8wP8aiskvU

Sri Aurobindo Birth anniversary: 15th August: Room darshan: https://youtu.be/elCHTf4z-qQ

Mother's first meeting with Sri Aurobindo on 29th March, 1914: https://youtu.be/T86Ll4lTuf4

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry in 1969: https://youtu.be/wlSWSZ_I78M

Samadhi at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry: https://youtu.be/79VmCr_3cLU

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry: 21-2-2021: https://youtu.be/Moc1rs9rBaU

The Service tree of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry: https://youtu.be/RWKL6ASQRNc

Pondicherry...temple...Aurobindo Ashram….etc: https://youtu.be/fTB02gzlnAk

PM Modi visits Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry: https://youtu.be/76ArDmtlJps

Pondicherry travel vlog: Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville..etc: https://youtu.be/5FLMJqMTBkk

Aurobindo Ashram in 1970's: rare documentary film: https://fb.watch/a8eMySvpom/

Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo & The Mother | All Life is Yoga!
https://auromere.wordpress.com/

Books by Sri R. Y. Deshpande on Sri Aurobindo's teachings:

(Sri Deshpande was my mentor and guide in BARC, Mumbai from 1970's)

About Sri Deshpande:

Born in 1931 RY Deshpande did his science studies from Osmania University, Hyderabad, India, and joined as a research physicist at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai in 1955. Later he worked at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, Berkeley, California USA, and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai. While at BARC he headed several Atomic Energy and Space Projects in Advance Technology. He has some fifty research papers published in national and international scientific journals. He was also an examiner for a number of PhD theses in the field of Solid State Physics. In 1981 Deshpande joined Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry where he taught physics and a few other subjects such as Astrophysics, Savitri, The Future Poetry, Science and Society for thirty years. During the same period he was for eight years the Editor of Mother India, a Monthly Review of Culture, published by the Ashram. During 2007-2008 Deshpande was a senior editor of Science-Culture-Integral Yoga Web-Magazine, SCIY founded in Los Angeles. Presently he runs two websites devoted specifically to Sri Aurobindo's epic Savitri and cultural matters of national and international interest. He gave on different fora, including Radio and TV, interviews, talks and seminars dealing with social, spiritual, scientific and literary aspects. Deshpande's literary activities include writing poetry, essays, articles, book reviews, comments which have been published in a few cultural periodicals. He is a published author of some two dozen books of poetry, literary criticism, Aurobindonian philosophy and culture, two reflective books on science and related social matters. He would however now like to focus his attention mainly on Savitri in its several creative dimensions. It is believed that his full series of talks on Savitri will be an enduring major contribution in this field.

Savitri Talks: The Symbol Dawn Paperback – August 15, 2012
by RY Deshpande (Author)
Link to download:
https://www.amazon.com/Savitri-Talks-Symbol-RY-Deshpande/dp/1480000000

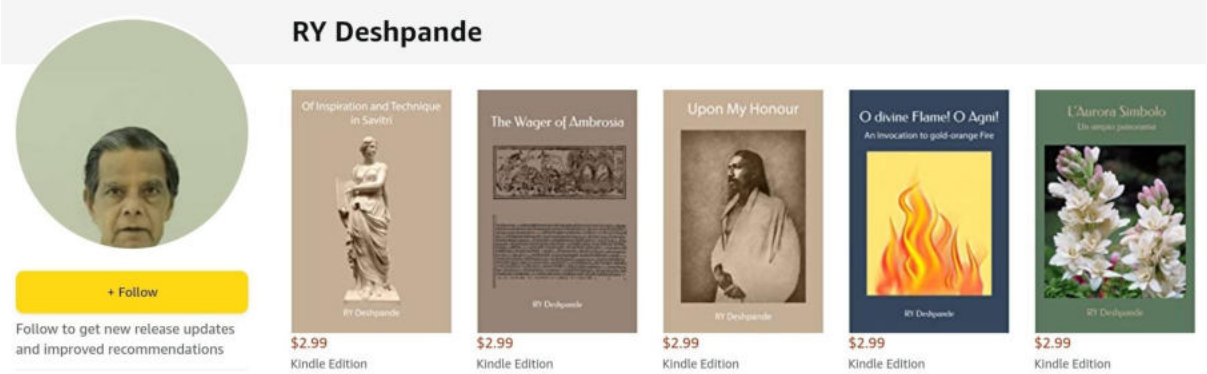
About the Talks on the Symbol Dawn, the opening canto of Sri Aurobindo's epic savitri, it is stated that these could be an essential tool for Savitri-lovers to develop the right perspective and context for Savitri-reading. It has not only synthesized a lot of earlier contributions, but also developed many essential original articulations. The concept of Savitri's yajna synthesises Savitri-readings with the Vedic perspective as, for instance, we have in the Purusha Sukta when seen as an Aurobindonian interpretation of the cosmology that goes

with it. But perhaps certain aspects also need be elaborated, such as the Mother's story of creation, Asuras and Gods, the Mind of Night, the two Nothingnesses and the inability of the second Nothingness to create by itself, Matter as the theatre for the divine Event, the New Creation and many such key features. But perhaps these are already present in the Talks. The whole inspiration behind them is to grow in the richness of Savitri. Savitri gives us the Truth and the things of the Truth. To live in Savitri is to enter into the spirit of its luminous magnificence, Savitri who shall take us closer to the supreme Yogi-Poet.

Other books on Savitri...etc by RY Deshpande:

Ref:https://www.amazon.com/RY-Deshpande/e/B0090UGYJM%3Fref=dbs_a_mng_rwt_scns_share

For example:



…… and, see/ download many more books in the above link.

ॐ स॒ह ना॑ ववतु । स॒ह नौ॑ भुनक्तु । स॒ह वी॒र्यं॑ करवावहै । ते॒ज॒स्विना॒वधी॑तमस्तु मा विद्विषा॒वहै ॥ **(3)**

ॐ शान्ति॒: शान्ति॒: शान्ति॑: ॥ **(3)**